

To the House Committee on Energy and Environment

I want to express my strong opposition to S.100 as it stands. The bill seeks to increase availability of low and moderate income housing, and I'm all for that. However, I don't believe S.100 will provide such housing because it doesn't take the tough steps, like rent control, to ensure that new housing will remain affordable at the low-moderate level.

What it will do is create an open season for development of any and all kinds of housing that will end up priced at market rates. And, of course, the people who will be able to access that housing are the affluent. That so much housing in VT is already going to affluent people is one of the key issues. Unfortunately, the legislators who created this bill didn't really do their homework, and haven't really understood the causes of the housing crisis. The bill needs to go back to committee and more research is needed.

I am also not convinced the evidence supports the accusations against Act 250. 250, in fact, needs to be strengthened in the face of habitat loss and climate change.

Housing is not the only big issue facing Vermont, despite all the rhetoric that suggests it is. Housing development and environment both must be accounted for and this bill discards environment altogether. There is no balance here. Shelburne is one town seeking to find that balance, but if the state undercuts our capacity to identify and protect key natural areas via zoning then we are helpless. S.100 actually directly opposes our attempts to bring Shelburne in line with the goals of Act 171. Does that make any sense?

Please reject this bill in its current form. All it does is give developers a huge opportunity to make windfall profits.

Jim White
Shelburne